

On the MOVE

Story by Mike Latona
Photos by Greg Francis

Making beautiful music

School children form a commitment to their musical goals. Other students, like Heather McQuaid, who latched onto, when she was in fourth grade. A decade later, Heather still plays the instrument with gusto.

"I knew when I was 4 or 5 years old, that was my one. It was different and it sounded pretty," Heather, 18, said of the large woodwind instrument.

Heather, a senior at Our Lady of Mercy High School, is one of three students from Catholic high schools currently performing with the 1998-99 Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (RPYO). The 16-member group is gearing up for one of its biggest shows of the year when it joins the adult Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra for a 3 p.m. concert on Sunday, March 28, at Rochester's Eastman Theatre.

Auditions for the RPYO are held during the summer. Heather rehearsed through the year and made the final cut.

James Wang, a freshman at Nazareth Academy, is also a member. A violinist, he said that the experience has enabled him to raise his level of expertise.

"It's helped me a lot with my sight-reading. The (orchestra's) music is great; it sounds so good," said Jimmy, 14.

Megan Koch, a sophomore at Nazareth Academy, noted that the RPYO provides her with musical seasoning that she can't get elsewhere.

"You really get orchestral experience. In solo music you don't work with others, and chamber (orchestra) is not a large group," said Megan, 16, who plays the cel-

lo. This is her second year in the RPYO. Dedication to their RPYO commitments has meant some sacrifices along the way. Heather still plays the piano in addition to the bassoon, but said she has given up the saxophone because "I don't have time anymore."

Jimmy said he just quit the piano this year because he plays three sports at Nazareth and would like to stay involved in athletics as well as the RPYO.

"I would prefer to keep doing both, because sports is very important to me," he said.

Heather, Megan and Jimmy said they all take part in school-based musical groups, but their involvement is limited because of their RPYO commitments.

None of these three musicians plans to pursue musical careers. Heather said she will major in political science when she begins college next year, and Megan hopes to be an education major while Jimmy is considering medicine or business.

Heather, in her second year with the RPYO, explained that the life of a professional musician can be grueling because seats in major orchestras tend to open up very, very slowly. In addition, she said, musicians are often required to move around a great deal in order to advance their careers.

"I don't think that's any way I'd want to live," said Heather, a parishioner at St. Christopher Church in Chili.

Even so, music will remain an important part of Heather's life: She said she'd like to join a civic philharmonic orchestra wherever she attends college next year.

Megan, also, said she plans to continue performing for many years to come. "I definitely want to do something with music throughout my life, even if I don't have it as an occupation," she remarked.

Heather emphasized that music is vital to a well-rounded upbringing, and she hopes that children will see the arts as a way of expanding themselves.

"My parents

Our Lady of Mercy High School senior Heather Eysaman



were real big supporters of us going to concerts," she said. "The arts give us a chance to be creative, as opposed to just plopping yourself down on a couch."

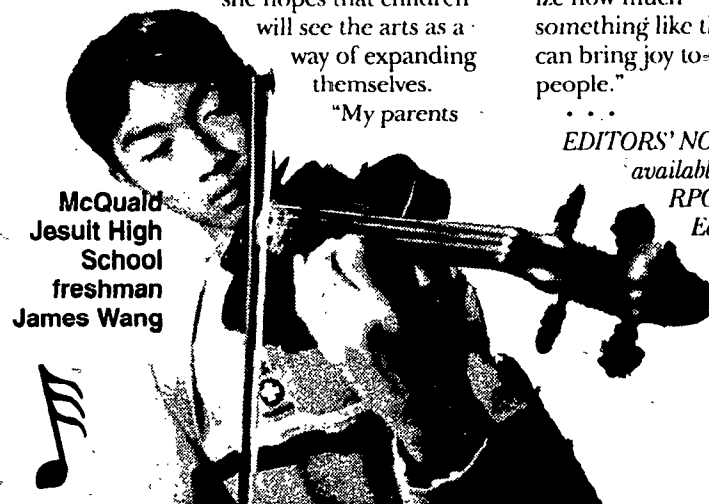
Heather said she found strong supporters of classical music when she traveled last year with the RPYO on a special tour of Europe. She was particularly touched by an appreciative crowd in the former East Germany.

"There was rapid ap-



Nazareth Academy sophomore Megan Koch

plause, and there was this energy running through us," Heather said. "You don't realize how much something like that can bring joy to other people."



McQuaid Jesuit High School freshman James Wang

EDITORS' NOTE: Tickets are still available for the March 28 RPYO/RPYO concert at the Eastman Theatre, 26 Gibbs St., Rochester. Tickets can be purchased at the door, or by calling 716/377-3537 or 454-2620. Cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students or senior citizens.

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